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## **Lieutenant Governor Maldonado Highlights Green Jobs Training Program at Independence High School in Bakersfield**

*150 students are enrolled in program that will add jobs to fastest growing industry in California*

BAKERSFIELD – Following his commitment to promote green energy as the next frontier to spur California’s economy, Lieutenant Governor Maldonado visited Independence High School in Bakersfield to recognize the school’s Energy and Utilities Academy. With 150 students enrolled in the program thus far, Independence High School anticipates seeing hundreds of students graduating from the school with job training in the renewable energy market.

“Green energy is the future of California,” said California Lieutenant Governor Abel Maldonado, “Our economic recovery is going to depend in part upon the growth and success of the clean tech sector. It is critical that the public and the private sectors lay the groundwork for California’s future workforce to be educated and skilled in this industry.”

Building upon the school’s Energy and Utilities Academy, the Kern Economic Development Foundation partnered with school administrators to mentor 40 young women in the academy. The Alliance for Women in Energy (AWE), a project founded by the Kern Economic Development Foundation, pairs young women in the academy with female business leaders in the energy industry. By initiating one-on-one mentoring session on a monthly basis and specifically preparing the students for careers in the energy industry, AWE hopes to make an impact on encouraging young women to enter into the clean tech sector.

“Economic Development is all about creating high-value jobs. We recognize that focusing on STEM-centered education (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) with these students will produce a great return on investment for Kern County,” said Richard Chapman, Executive Director of Kern Economic Development Foundation.

The Energy and Utilities Academy was launched in January 2009 and now has an enrollment of 150 students whose academic curriculum includes the economic impacts of

major energy sources in California, including wind, solar, and biofuels. The academy's mission is to comprehensively prepare and mentor students for careers in the energy industry, including jobs in the green tech sector.

Since taking office, the Lieutenant Governor, who also chairs the California Commission on Economic Development, has reached out to regional economic development centers statewide to encourage sustainable job creation efforts and building a skilled, educated workforce.